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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7728th meeting
Wednesday, 29 June 2016, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gimolieca
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. De la Calle García
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Letter dated 8 June 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/510)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Letter dated 8 June 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/510)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/580, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/510, which contains a letter dated 8 June 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President (*spoke in French*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2296 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 2296 (2016) on the renewal and extension of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) because we believe that it is very important for the Security Council to give its full support to the Mission so it can discharge its mandate, as set out in resolution 1769 (2007).

My delegation stresses that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Sudan are inviolable and protected. We take this opportunity to reiterate our support for our brothers in the Sudan in their efforts to restore peace and security throughout Darfur. We also note that the situation has improved in most areas in Darfur. We also pay tribute to all the positive efforts of the Government of the Sudan to reach a settlement in Darfur and honour its commitments under the Darfur peace agreement, in particular the holding of a referendum on the administrative status of Darfur within the Sudan, as well as for its positive achievements, including the signing of the road map agreement in April.

The situation in Darfur today is very different from that which prevailed before the Mission was established in 2007. The fact that the Mission shall remain in the region without a time frame to determine its future is therefore not realistic. We need a clearly formulated exit strategy, with the full participation of the African Union, including detailed, measurable benchmarks that could be assessed in real terms. In that regard, I commend the efforts of the Joint Working Group to formulate the UNAMID exit strategy, the special report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2016/510), and the results and recommendations contained therein, which seek to implement the benchmarks of the UNAMID exit strategy. We also stress the importance of focusing on the development of Darfur and the reconstruction of its economic, political and judicial institutions, in accordance with the priorities and the needs and requirements of the Government of Sudan and the five states of Darfur.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Bearing in mind the important stabilizing role of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the Russian delegation voted in favour of resolution 2296 (2016), extending the mandate of the hybrid mission. As a result of intensive consultations, members of the Council managed to make the text sufficiently balanced. In particular, the resolution reflects the fact that the security situation

in Darfur has significantly improved of late and that relative calm prevails in four of the five states of the region. Isolated pockets of resistance on the part of insurgents are found only in the mountainous region of Jebel Marra in Central Darfur.

Against that backdrop, we must raise the issue of developing an exit strategy for UNAMID. For us, an important provision of the resolution is that which tasks the Secretary-General with providing recommendations by October about benchmarks for UNAMID. We hope that future reports of the Secretariat will fully reflect the conclusions and recommendations of the Joint Working Group tasked with developing an exit strategy for UNAMID.

The recently published special report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2016/510) does not meet those criteria at all. It is not by chance that the African Union Peace and Security Council has shown relatively little enthusiasm for that document. The Joint Working Group on Darfur adequately incorporates the views of all parties interested in the situation in Darfur and various aspects of UNAMID activities, including that of the host country. If the Secretariat took the conclusions and proposals of the Working Group into account, that would be fully in accordance with the basic principles of peacekeeping.

At the same time, we cannot agree with all the provisions of the resolution just adopted. For example, we in now way share the concern expressed about the referendum in Darfur. Over 70 per cent of voters of the region took part in that referendum. I believe that the Security Council should show respect for the expression of the will of the voters of Darfur, especially against the backdrop of recent referendums in Africa and Europe. Year after year, the tone of the resolutions on Darfur have become increasingly negative. It is our impression that the only goal of the authors and co-authors of those resolutions is basically to ramp up pressure on the Government of the Sudan, using every opportunity at their disposal. Unfortunately, it is UNAMID that often finds itself hostage to those political games.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates the commitment of the Government of the Sudan to the promotion of national dialogue, peace and stability in the Darfur region and its economic development, and to the successful organization of the referendum in Darfur. China welcomes the mediation efforts of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and the signing by the Government of the Sudan of the road map agreement proposed by the Panel. The international community should urge the relevant armed groups and opposition to expeditiously sign the road map agreement and participate in the national dialogue and the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in order to achieve a comprehensive political settlement of the Darfur question.

China appreciates the work of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to promote the political process in Darfur, mediate and resolve intercommunal conflicts, and assist in delivering humanitarian relief. United Nations peacekeeping operations should effectively respect the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of host countries, heed the opinion of host countries and adjust the scale and mandate of operations in a timely manner, in keeping with the changes in local circumstances and needs. China welcomes the work of the Sudanese Government to assist UNAMID in implementing its mandate. We hope that the Secretariat, the African Union and the Sudanese Government will continue to take advantage of the tripartite mechanism and the platform of the Joint Working Group to strengthen communications and consultation, duly address any problems that emerge during the course of cooperation, and strive to formulate a practical and reasonable exit strategy for the Mission as soon as possible.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its support for the work of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). We acknowledge its valuable contribution to achieving the strategic priorities of the mission, especially regarding the protection of civilians, the facilitation of access to humanitarian assistance and mediation, including through its conflict prevention and mitigation strategy and its promotion of grass-roots dialogue.

We also categorically condemn attacks on UNAMID, its personnel and its facilities, whose inviolability must be respected in accordance with international law. We also like reiterate our call on the parties to the conflict to give their full support to the work of UNAMID so that it can fully and effectively implement the mandate entrusted to it, in the framework of close cooperation with the Government of the Sudan.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela voted in favour of resolution 2296 (2016), which renews the UNAMID mandate for one year. We are convinced that it is essential to maintain the unity of the Security Council in addressing this important issue and our support for UNAMID. We hope that the same positive spirit will prevail in promoting a negotiated political solution to the prolonged conflict that continues to affect this brotherly African country, in particular in the region of Darfur.

In that sense, Venezuela reaffirms that a political rather than military solution is the only way to end the conflict in Darfur through a direct and inclusive political dialogue between the parties to the conflict without preconditions of any kind, which would promote stability, development and lasting peace in that country and resolve the very complex humanitarian situation there. We therefore call on the parties that have not yet done so, particularly the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid, to subscribe to the road map agreement, which we believe will serve as the basis for achieving lasting peace. We also think that the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur establishes a framework that should be used as a foundation for negotiations between the parties to the conflict, complemented by initiatives such as the national dialogue convened by the Government in Khartoum and the internal dialogue and consultations in Darfur.

In that regard, and considering the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur to be a positive step, our delegation welcomes the referendum on the administrative status of Darfur, held from 11 to 13 April, in which more than 90 per cent of eligible voters took part, and for which the African Union and the League of Arab States served as observers. We also believe that the efforts of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel, led by former South African President Thado Mbeki, as the primary mediation group, are critical to revitalizing the peace process and putting an end to the conflict, for which we would like to reiterate our full support.

Lastly, we call on the parties to respect the human rights and international humanitarian law, in line with the relevant legal instruments. We also express our firm support for the work of the African Union, based on the search for African solutions to African problems.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): The United States supports the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2296 (2016), renewing the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for another year. The United States welcomes the Government of the Sudan's recent declaration of a unilateral cessation of hostilities in Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile. We would like to see that declaration extended to the Darfur region as, unfortunately, fighting by the Government and its proxies continues in Darfur.

An end to military offences and fighting in all of those areas would bring much-needed relief to thousands of Sudanese and create an improved environment for dialogue, leading to a political solution. Lasting peace will come only from a negotiated solution that addresses the key political and security drivers of conflict in all areas of the Sudan. Civilians continue to suffer in Darfur with, according to the United Nations, at least 80,000 newly displaced in 2016 alone and more than 2 million internally displaced persons who are in need of aid and cannot return to their homes.

In the absence of a comprehensive political agreement and in the face of those pressing needs, UNAMID plays a critical role in protecting civilians and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Darfur. Any calls for the mission to leave the Sudan are woefully premature. We urge the Government of the Sudan to allow the mission to carry out the mandate the Security Council has given it, including by not placing restrictions on its freedom of movement or its needed food and supplies. We understand that as of 23 June, all UNAMID food-ration shipments that had been held at Port Sudan by the Government of the Sudan had been cleared for release. We welcome that development and call on the Government of the Sudan to urgently release of the nearly 300 remaining containers of much-needed equipment, in compliance with its obligations under its status-of-forces agreement with the United Nations.

I would like to briefly address the report of the Joint Working Group, which has been raised by some colleagues. The United States certainly welcomes and encourages cooperation among the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations and the African Union to efficiently and effectively implement the UNAMID mandate. But we must be clear that the Security Council, in order to conduct its business, will continue to rely primarily on the analysis and advice of the Secretary-General about the situation in countries on our agenda.

We believe that the Joint Working Group's report downplays the scale of fighting in Darfur and is inconsistent with the special report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (S/2016/510). For example, the Joint Working Group assesses that there were "no more rebel movements in four states", but the special report finds that the Sudanese military claimed victories in South Darfur earlier this year, conducted bombings in Central Darfur and pursued rebels in North Darfur in January.

Moreover, we know from the past 10 years that the rebel movements are constantly mobile, and that any single snapshot in time is not necessarily indicative of a larger trend. Also, how do we square the Joint Working Group's conclusions that "access is granted for most patrols" with the conclusion of the special report that UNAMID continued "to face severe restrictions on its access and freedom of movement in Darfur" (*S/2016/510, para. 48*)?

Lastly, the Joint Working Group emphasizes the beginning of voluntary returns and early recovery assistance that has been provided to the people of Darfur, but ignores the surge of displacements that occurred earlier this year in Jebel Marra, where tens of thousands of new internally displaced persons are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

Finally, we reiterate that any exit strategy for UNAMID is pretty clear. It is one linked to the achievement of the agreed benchmarks on an inclusive political process, the protection of civilians and the prevention of violence. We look forward to progress on achieving those benchmarks.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): As the Security Council's penholder for Darfur, the United Kingdom wholeheartedly welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2296 (2016), which extends the important work of African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for another year. I also welcome the constructive spirit in which all members of the Security Council engaged with us during the negotiations.

The situation in Darfur for many is desperate. Millions of people have fled their homes. Millions of people need humanitarian assistance just to survive. To the United Kingdom, the need for UNAMID is therefore clear. The resolution is much more than a simple mandate renewal; it is a vital recommitment to protecting civilians in Darfur, to improving the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to supporting mediation, both between the Government and the Darfur armed groups, as well as among communities. The text strikes a balance. It enables UNAMID to provide the protection and support necessary for the vulnerable in Darfur, but it also seeks to help deliver progress on the benchmarks that will ultimately enable UNAMID to leave Darfur, as my Egyptian colleagues and others have just set out.

In adopting the resolution unanimously today — and I very much agree with the comments made by my Venezuelan colleague on the importance of unanimity — we have sent an important message of support to UNAMID and to the people of Darfur. For the Government of the Sudan, it is an honest but fair message. Through this resolution, we have not shied away from the situation in Darfur. We have clearly expressed our concern at the fighting in Jebel Marra and the impact on civilians, especially of aerial bombardments. We have also called on the Government of the Sudan to ensure unfettered access for UNAMID and humanitarian personnel and to release all UNAMID shipments. It is essential that UNAMID have the food and equipment that it needs to deliver on its mandate. We welcome the recent progress on this issue and trust that it will continue.

We have welcomed positive developments in other areas, such as the Government of the Sudan's adoption of an action plan for the protection of children from violations in armed conflict, and we have welcomed the Government's signing of the road map agreement proposed by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel. We urge non-signatory groups to join them and sign this important document.

I am confident that this resolution provides the basis for a strong relationship between the Council, the African Union, UNAMID and the Government of the Sudan. I hope that it will enable us all to work together in a spirit of mutual cooperation to the benefit of those suffering in Darfur.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to express our thanks and appreciation to all of the members of the Council, especially those members with whom we have maintained contact since the draft was presented for the extension of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). I

should like also to express our profound appreciation to all those who have made every effort to study and consider the viewpoint of my delegation as well as the undeniably true information that we have submitted on the situation in Darfur.

I should like also to welcome the general assessments and statements made by the various members of the Council in which they explained that the situation in Darfur has improved. In our assessment of the security, humanitarian and political situation in Darfur, we do not rely only on random documents; there is much information we could invoke and advance, but the fact is that we rely on the realities on the ground, not coloured by any prior position or objective that could distort or in many cases undermine the truth.

When the events that have befallen the five states of Darfur during the period covered by the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/510) and by resolution 2296 (2016), which has just been adopted by the Council, the events in Darfur cannot be denied, ignored or refuted. Darfur today has no rebellion or armed movements; the presence of those armed movements and groups was the reason for the deployment of the African Union forces in Darfur until 2006. This led to the deployment of UNAMID since 2007; that is the reason why we have UNAMID in Darfur. This is its raison d'être. If the purpose of UNAMID is no longer there, then its presence is no longer necessary. UNAMID is not there for any other reason. It has not come to secure its supplies from Port Sudan on the Red Sea coast; this is something that we leave to the administrative bodies responsible for that matter.

The resolution that was adopted today extending UNAMID's mandate for another year is replete with contradictions between its various paragraphs and contradicts the facts on the ground that we see in Darfur today. After the conclusion of the military operations in most parts of Darfur and recently in Jebel Marra, the humanitarian situation has started to improve, and Darfur has seen the voluntary return of internally displaced persons - 800,000 returnees - according to the May 2016 statement made by the humanitarian aid commission. The last of those movements came after the Jebel Marra incidents; 24,000 people returned, according to the UNAMID sector chief for central Darfur, who had visited the area of Jebel Marra only three days prior.

Also, there has been some improvement and progress in connection with the plan to collect weapons from civilians and in terms of all of the efforts that are being made to reach a political solution through the implementation of the various provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, which remains the single internationally agreed forum for the achievement of peace and security in Darfur.

Today Darfur is free of any organized military presence of military armed movements, as I said earlier. Those movements had been wreaking havoc in Darfur since 2003. The military operations that have been undertaken by the Sudanese armed forces in Jebel Marra have put end to the excesses committed by the Abdul Wahid faction. We have put an end to his brigandry and to his targeting of civilians, and ensured the safety of the land roads that connect that area with other parts of the Sudan. Our efforts have enabled students, for the first time in 13 years – I repeat, for the first time in 13 years – to go back to school and take examinations for various educational certificates in the Sudan although they had exceeded the normal age for taking such examinations. That was the fate of children given the acts carried out by the Abdul Wahid factions, which threatened their parents and their property if they did not send their children to his camps to fight alongside his soldiers.

This is something that cannot be denied. The Government of the Sudan has been asking since 2014 that UNAMID start to devise its exit strategy. The Joint Working Group was formed as a result, with the participation of the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations. The Group has carried out two assessment visits to the five states of Darfur, the last of those visits was in the month of May.

The Working Group showed clearly that the situation in Darfur had developed in a way that would permit the drawdown of the mission and the withdrawal of UNAMID units from a number of positions. However, some in this international Organization unfortunately refused to accept this recommendation, despite the fact that it had been accepted by the representatives of the African Union, a regional organization whose recommendations constitute a significant dimension in the decisions taken by the Council. We can therefore see no justification whatsoever for paragraph 27 of resolution 2296 (2016). We see no justification for limiting the task of the Joint Working Group in

presenting recommendations; this is something that the Government of Sudan totally rejects.

Let me convey to the Council our categorical view that it is extremely important for the Group to continue its work to implement the exit strategy in the manner agreed at previous meetings. I must also underline that our Government believes that in the work of the Secretariat, especially the work of the Department for Peacekeeping Operations, we see a lot of procrastination and delaying tactics, which do not serve the cooperation and coordination efforts that are being made by the Government of the Sudan. Therefore it is necessary for this administration to take into consideration the need to formulate an exit strategy, view our opinions with respect, and stop prevaricating and the use of delaying tactics. The Government of the Sudan has been asking for an exit strategy for nine years, during which a great deal has been attained. This is the only way to underline the success achieved by UNAMID in attaining its purpose and letting it be known to the members of the Council. The Government of the Sudan is fully prepared to undertake its own assessment or to welcome another Security Council visit to assess the situation in Darfur and to collect the evidence that some wish to ignore or refute.

Despite all the complications and obstacles, we reiterate our resolve to achieve peace and justice and to ensure the return of displaced persons to Darfur, in full, sincere, impartial and faithful cooperation with the Council, so that we can rebuild our beloved homeland and contribute thereby to world peace and security.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.